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NOTES AND QUERIES.

SPITTING ON THE HANDS (vol. iii. pp. 58, 161). — Spitting on the palms of the hands, and then rubbing them together, was a common thing with wood-sawyers and wood-splitters a few years ago, when wood was more generally used for fuel than it has been of late years.

I have often seen laboring men, in shovelling snow, use the same practice. I noticed, in my boyhood, that when any of the boys were about to run, or jump over a fence, they would invariably spit upon their palms, or make a motion something like spitting, and do the same thing whenever they were about to attempt any movement requiring extra strength of either arms or legs. I have done the same thing myself. I think most men in this vicinity must be familiar with this, and I do not know that the practice was confined to this locality. It seems to be a sort of deliberating or gathering of strength, before making any attempt at running or jumping. I have observed that men do this same thing in the game of "ten-pins" or any games of that character.

But a most singular illustration of the peculiarity referred to occurs to me. I have been told that it is a fact, although I cannot myself vouch for it, as ever having seen it, — that journeymen bread-bakers, sometimes in working up their dough, begin, perhaps without thinking much about it, by first rolling up their shirt sleeves, and then spitting upon the palms, prepare for an outlay of strength upon the mixture of flour and water. It may be the result of early habits and practices, which we all know are hard to change. This strikes us of course as very disgusting; but perhaps if we were "behind the scenes," in many shops and kitchens, we should notice things quite as disagreeable. I think the latter practice described shows that the object was not as some suppose, to make the hands stick to anything, but as I have said, it is a mere habit which had come originally from a kind of gathering strength by rubbing the hands together, and the spitting was often no more than a motion of the lips indicating that one could not get away from his old boyish habit.

Henry M. Brooks.

SALEM, MASS., July 8, 1890.

GYPSY SORCERY, MAGIC, AND FORTUNE-TELLING. — This work will be published by T. Fisher Unwin, London, in the form of an *édition de luxe*, of which only 150 copies will be printed, price one guinea. Each copy will be numbered and signed. The edition will be on the best paper with large ornamental initials, etc., drawn by the author. The book is dedicated to the French Folk-lorists of the *Congrès des Traditions populaires* (1889), as a token of gratitude for hospitality.

As an example of the increase in value of limited editions, it may be remarked that the completed volumes of the Journal of the Gypsy Folk-Lore Society, of which only 150 copies are printed, now sell at more than double price.